Toronto metro

MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016

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ALL DOWNHILL FROM HERE

This is how we adapt to winter in Toronto (and across Canada)

metroNEWS

URBAN ETIQUETTE

How to tell your friends you can't afford to hang out

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Toronto metro

Your essential | MONDAY, DECEMBER 12, 2016 | High 2°C/Low -4°C Snowy

OUT IN THE COLD

Mirvish Village mainstays frustrated to be 'forced out in January' thanks to Honest Ed's redevelopment

metroNEWS

Child care costing 'my entire salary'

MAKING ENDS MEET

Toronto fees top Canadian cities — and families are feeling it

Toronto mother Crystal Hunt is losing money every day she works because the cost of daycare for her baby and toddler is more than she earns in take-home pay.

"I had an opportunity to work for this amazing company," says Hunt, 33, who took an entry position with the e-commerce company Shopify this fall.

"I needed to be in the workforce. If I waited until my kids were in school, my skills would be null and void. And I can't afford to go to school again. We have a mortgage."

Monthly fees for Hunt's two boys — Ethan, 16 months, and William, 3 — are more than $2,600 in after-tax dollars, "my entire salary," she says.

Hunt and her husband Jonathan are not alone in their struggle to pay for child care in Toronto, where parent fees are still the highest in the country, according to the third annual survey of child-care fees in Canada's largest 28 cities.

Median monthly fees in the city top $1,649 for infants, $1,375 for toddlers and $1,150 for preschoolers.

And the daycare sticker-shock is only getting worse, says the report being released Monday by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

Across the country, fees have jumped an average of more than 8 per cent in the past two years, three times faster than inflation, the report says; in Toronto, fees have spiked by 15 per cent.

At about $36,000 a year, the median cost of licensed daycare for a baby and a toddler in Toronto is more than university tuition, the report notes.

"It will be no surprise to many parents that regulated child care is expensive, but what is most shocking is that in many cities fees have risen much faster than inflation since 2014," says economist David Macdonald, the study's author. "This can amount to parents paying a $1,000 more a year per child than they did just two years ago."

Macdonald, who says he doesn't know why fees have skyrocketed, hopes to dig into the reasons during next year's survey.

"Even if we could explain it, I don't know if that would help, particularly, because they still have to pay the fees," he adds.

TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Toronto FC falls heartbreakingly short, and this one's going to hurt for a while metroSPORTS

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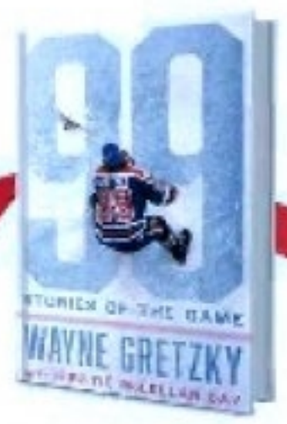

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metro NEWS

Your essential daily news

Wisdom, a Laysan albatross called and the world's oldest known seabird, is expecting again.

Humans of Toronto by K. Omar

"No matter what everyone says or thinks about them, people should be themselves or do what they like. It's not good to be the same as everyone else. I think it's important to be different and do your own thing.

Humans of Toronto is K. Omar's social photography project aimed at photographing and talking to people in the city. Selections from her work feature weekly in Metro. See more at Humans of Toronto on Instagram.

Get space for stuff

START-UP

App connects people with extra things to those with extra room

May Warren
Metro | Toronto

Karen Wang, Sarah Selhi and France Brunelle created an app that helps people looking for spaces to rent. EDUARDO LIMA/METRO

Kevin Tam is sharing a corner of the basement in his Parkdale home with unusual tenants: someone else's boxes and a couch.

The 36-year-old is renting out the space for about $170 a month through a new Toronto startup called SpaceiShare.

The new service connects people who have room to spare in a city where square footage comes at a premium.

"I don't even notice the stuff, and I think it's a fraction of my space," Tam said about the unconventional arrangement. "You have Airbnb which allows people to share their homes with other people and it seemed rather obvious to me it's a lot easier to share your space with boxes."

The platform was started by three Toronto women last summer. People can also rent out parking spots, balconies, backyards and even pools.

The company, which has about 500 users so far, provides renters and hosts with suggested prices and a legal document, and takes a cut of each transaction.

They will also cover up to $25,000 for damages not covered by insurance.

It's a good fit for Toronto, where people are finding themselves squeezing into tiny apartments or stretching their budgets to take on huge mortgages in exchange for more room, said cofounder Karen Wang.

Storage units are always an option, but they don't come cheap and are often located outside the city.

CEO Sarah Selhi said she got the idea from an aunt who paid $500 a month to store stuff for two years when she moved to Edmonton temporarily.

"Some family out there would have loved to have made $6,000," Selhi said, adding most renters are looking to store things like holiday decorations, mementoes or baby gear.

"There's so many people out there with space, and there's so many people out there who need it."

MISSISSAUGA

It's no longer just Valentine's Day in Ontario.

From now on, Feb. 14 will be known as Hazel McCallion Day. The Ontario legislature has approved the designation, first pitched earlier this year in a private member's bill from Mississauga–Brampton South MPP Amrit Mangat.

McCallion, whose birthday is Feb. 14, was elected mayor of Mississauga in 1978 and held that position until 2014 when she retired. Mangat called the 95-year-old a "role model" from whom many young women can "draw inspiration."

CHRIS CLAY/MISSISSAUGA NEWS

PHOTO: ROB BEINTEMA/METROLAND

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City blasted with first major snowfall

Want to know when your street will get plowed? Follow the city's winter fleet in real-time at toronto.ca/plowTO. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

After weeks of waiting for the white stuff, Toronto's fleet of snowplows finally hit the streets Sunday.

The snow began falling in the morning, and as much as 15 centimetres of snow was expected in Toronto by Monday, according to Environment Canada. The first major snowfall of the season was a few weeks late — the city usually sees some snow accumulation by mid to late November.

As snow began sticking to local roads, the city's winter operations department said its fleet of 570 road plows, 300 sidewalk plows and 200 salt trucks were dispatched.

Temperatures were forecasted to hover around freezing, with the low of -4 C on Monday night. There will be chances of flurries throughout the week, but no major snowfall is expected.

Both the city and Environment Canada encouraged commuters to adjust to the winter weather conditions. Between noon and 5 p.m. Sunday, Toronto Police operations received 70 collision calls.

Neurotica Records shop owner Scott Cramer (top); The Beguiling owner Peter Birkemore (centre), Eloise Ptito-Echeverria, sales associate at Coal Miner's Daughter (bottom). EDUARDO LIMA/ METRO

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Frustration abounds

MIRVISH VILLAGE

Redevelopment construction 'is going to be like a war zone'

Gilbert Ngabo
Metro | Toronto

Scott Cramer still hasn't found a new location for Neurotica Records, but when he does, he hopes it will be far away from Mirvish Village.

"This is going to be a monstrosity," said the owner of the vinyl shop on Markham Street near Bloor. "It's going to be like a war zone once construction starts."

Cramer is one of a dozen business owners affected by the redevelopment of the Honest Ed's location. The iconic bargain store will soon be transformed into a massive residential and commercial complex.

However, as the construction deadline looms, some entrepreneurs in the area are frustrated with how the developer is handling the transition.

Cramer believed retailers would be given more time to prepare for the relocation. Instead, he says he's being "forced out in January" instead of waiting at least until the spring, when the weather is better.

"They kept everybody hanging until just recently. It's like they didn't want anybody badmouthing them," he said, adding the sudden upheaval makes a difficult process even harder.

"Finding a place in Toronto that's not going to put you out of business in six months is very tough," he said.

Westbank, the Vancouver-based developer behind the redevelopment, has promised to maintain the neighbourhood character by including community parks and lowrise retail spaces. But residents and businesses say Mirvish Village will never be the same.

"There's what a developer says they'll do and there's what they actually end up doing. Who knows what will happen," said a skeptical Peter Birkemore. His comic shop The Beguiling will move to a new location near College and Spadina early next month.

"It's just a bummer for everybody. This is the coolest street in Toronto and it's sad that we're losing it for money," said Eloise Ptito-Echeverria, a sales associate at the Coal Miner's Daughter clothing store.

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Students learn cost of hate

TOLERANCE

Social justice program tours Ontario with lessons in life

Gyselle Ferreira (centre) and Grade 7 peers attend an hour-long Tour for Humanity session. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Thirty Grade 7 students stare silently at the haunting history lesson unfolding before their eyes. Light from the giant video screen reflects off their sombre faces. So does shock, at the sights and sounds from some of humanity's — and Canada's — darkest moments.

They see black-and-white footage of gaunt prisoners behind the barbed wire of concentration camps. Images of a crowded ship carrying 900 Jewish refugees fleeing the Nazis, turned away by the Canadian government. Anti-Japanese signs from the Second World War. Indigenous children lined up in residential schools they were forced to attend after being ripped from their families.

Behind the students, the words "hope," "respect" and "dignity" line the wall above portraits of Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr. and Anne Frank — because horror can also bring hope when ordinary people fight against it.

"It's going to take awhile for me to take in everything I saw," says Cassandra Collura, 12, after the hour-long Tour for Humanity session held in a one-of-a-kind mobile classroom. "I had never imagined it to be that bad."

But Cassandra believes it's important for students to know the bleakest parts of history.

"I think the main message is to not discriminate and why we should stand up to it."

The refurbished RV that Cassandra and her classmates from St. Mary Catholic School in Nobleton climbed aboard in November is an unlikely place for a searing history lesson on human rights and tolerance.

But the vehicle, which converts into a state-of-the-art theatre when parked, is how the Toronto non-profit Friends of Simon Wiesenthal Centre for Holocaust Studies is taking its social-justice message to schools across Ontario.

The mobile classroom, accommodating up to 180 students a day from Kenora to Windsor, is much more than a travelling classroom.

It's also "a safe space" away from the normal routine, says Daniella Lurion, who facilitated the sessions at St. Mary and has been teaching the programs for more than two years.

Amid blaring headlines about hate, bigotry and terrorism, the tour is in huge demand as a way to tackle complex subject matter and to show kids how they can use their voices to fight back.

Tour for Humanity runs five days a week from September through June. Since it was launched three years ago, the tour has delivered its interactive programs, tailored to age, to more than 50,000 students at 315 schools. Schools typically pay $500 for the day — covering half the organization's costs — for up to six classes.

The sweeping journey through history and incorporating contemporary issues such as online bullying and racism via social media, has an impact.

Almost two of every three hate crimes based on race, ethnicity, religion or sexual orientation are committed by people ages 12 to 24, she tells the Grade 7 students.

Lurion wants kids to start thinking critically.

"I hope that even one student leaves the bus and either does something positive, or questions something they see or hear," she adds. "That's the first step to change." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Protesters to appeal officer's sentence

The hundreds of G20 protesters who were corralled, detained and arrested by Toronto police on the orders of Supt. Mark Fenton are free to appeal Fenton's penalty, which they find too lenient.

Fenton was found guilty of three charges under the Police Services Act for his decision to "kettle" and mass arrest demonstrators in 2010. He was sentenced to a formal reprimand and docked 30 days of vacation.

In rulings released this month, the Ontario Civilian Police Commission allowed protesters to appeal the penalty imposed by retired Judge John Hamilton.

Fenton is appealing his convictions on two counts of unlawful arrest and one count of discreditable conduct. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Mark Fenton. TORSTAR

Exhibit turns meditation space

The low light and calm in the corridors of the Art Gallery of Ontario one recent afternoon — no trains of students chugging merrily from one exhibition to the next — would tell you that it's Monday, the one day each week the gallery is closed.

But in the antechamber of Mystical Landscapes, the AGO's out-there blockbuster of Gauguins, Monets, van Goghs and many others, a small crowd was building, however quietly.

Any other day, Mystical Landscapes would be packed with school groups, tourists and locals alike, eager for a gander at the marquee names. It can make for a buffet-style art viewing experience of small bites and pressure to keep moving.

Contemplating art at the AGO. TORSTAR

Today, though. 20 people all told, stride slowly and silently through the empty galleries, coming to rest in a curl of chairs waiting in front of Van Gogh's Starry Night at Arles.

The peace is exactly the point. Through December and January, the gallery has reserved Mondays for a view in keeping with the spiritual frame within which Mystical Landscapes resides: Visio Divina, a type of prayer focused on visual association, for one, and Mindful Movement, a soothing yoga session.

Today, it's a Buddhist sitting, a guided session of meditation and breath. TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

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METRO TEMPERATURE CHECK

Winter is here, and if there's anything that unites us as Canadians, it's our shared joys and sorrows brought on by the cold, white, fluffy stuff. If you think you're having a bad winter right now, just remember this: You're not alone. Here is a round up of winter weather across other Metro cities on Sunday. Toronto, Calgary, Winnipeg, Edmonton and Vancouver are relishing their snow days, while Halifax and Ottawa are expecting snowfall on Monday. **METRO**

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School won't teach immigrants' children

EDUCATION

Children had to leave, despite being Canadian citizens

David P. Ball
Metro | Vancouver

"Where kids reach for the stars."

That's the motto emblazoned above the entrance of North Otter Elementary School, surrounded by snow-glistening fields in Langley, B.C. east of Vancouver.

But for a five- and seven-year-old living just minutes away, that motto appears not to apply.

Despite the fact that both the five- and seven-year old were born in Canada — and are therefore Canadian citizens — the local school district won't let them enrol because of their Mexican parents' paperwork troubles.

The federal government offered the mother and children visitor visas so they could enrol by a Sept. 30 deadline, while their father continues his paperwork in Mexico to resume his 10-year employment at Hastings Racecourse.

Two children were barred from enrolling in elementary school.
DAVID P. BALL/METRO

"I sent all the papers, I never lied. They asked me for my status, and I sent my visa," explained their mother, a 30-year-old optometry student from Mexico City, whom Metro agreed not identify because of their precarious immigration process. "They were really excited to be at school — the principal was so nice and took to kids to their classrooms. But after only a couple hours, they called and told us to pick them up: 'Your kids cannot be here.'"

It turned out they were neither registered for classes, nor covered by the school's insurance, a staffer explained.

"They asked us, 'Mom, why are you picking us up early?" she recalled, sobbing apologetically.

According to a provincial Ministry of Education — which couldn't discuss "details" — "eligibility for free public education is based on residence rather than citizenship or immigration status," said a spokesman.

The problem lies in the B.C. School Act's wording that what is required is parents be "ordinarily resident" of the province. But although individual school districts fall under provincial jurisdiction, each determines its own enrolment policies.

Langley School District did not respond to Metro's request for comment. But the province needs to clarify and standardize its registration rules, argued advocates with Sanctuary Health. Alejandra Lopez Bravo said the issue is much larger than this one family in Langley.

IMMIGRATION

Refugees find Canada 'peaceful,' 'welcoming'

Noura Alissa says she's very grateful for the warm welcome she's received in Canada, but admits the year since she arrived in Montreal from Syria has been more difficult than she expected.

"Trying to find a job while learning French has been difficult, but I am trying," the 25-year-old Syrian refugee said in English in an interview Sunday. She said the warm welcome she's received from Canadians has helped ease the transition.

It has been a year since Canada welcomed the first group of Syrians that the government flew out of refugee camps, and both political leaders and refugees marked the occasion over the weekend with a mixture of pride and an acknowledgment of the challenges that remain.

Immigration Minister John McCallum said he would never forget joining Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and other cabinet ministers at Toronto's Pearson airport on Dec. 10, 2015 to greet the first plane load of refugees.

"At a time when many countries closed their doors to refugees, we in Canada said 'come on in, you're welcome,'" he said at an event in Montreal on Sunday to mark the anniversary.

"You cannot compare the life in a peaceful country with life where there is war," said George Kas Barsoum. "This country is peaceful, this country is welcoming, it is very, very good."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

CHILD CARE

Long-term funding vowed

A study released Monday suggests that the cost of child-care fees in some of Canada's biggest cities has skyrocketed over the last three years, rising an average of more than twice the rate of inflation. Social Development Minister Jean-Yves Duclos said recently that the Liberals plan to make a long-term funding commitment in the 2017 budget to help provinces expand their child care systems. THE CANADIAN PRESS

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Trump shuns his briefings on intel

POLITICS

President-elect also said Russian hacking claims are 'ridiculous'

Donald Trump on Sunday called a recent CIA assessment of Russian hacking "ridiculous" and says he's not interested in getting daily intelligence briefings — an unprecedented public dismissal by a president-elect of the nation's massive and sophisticated intelligence apparatus.

Trump's remarks come as key congressional Republicans joined Democrats in demanding a bipartisan investigation into the Kremlin's activities and questioned consideration of Exxon Mobil CEO Rex Tillerson - who has close business ties with Moscow — as head of the State Department.

Asked whether he's rejecting valuable intelligence on Fox News Sunday, Trump was defiant.

"I get it when I need it," he said of the top-secret briefings sessions, adding that he's leaving it up to the briefers to decide when a development represents a "change" big enough to notify him.

"I'm, like, a smart person. I don't have to be told the same thing in the same words every single day for the next eight years," Trump said.

The CIA has concluded with "high confidence" that Russia sought to influence the U.S. election on behalf of Trump. The finding alarmed lawmakers, including Senate Armed Services Committee Chairman John McCain who said Sunday he planned to put Sen. Lindsay Graham, a staunch Trump critic, in charge of investigating the claim.

McCain also has questions about Tillerson's business relationship with Russian President Vladimir Putin, although it's not clear Tillerson will be nominated. Sunday afternoon, Tillerson had still not been formally offered the job, according to a person with knowledge of the process who spoke on condition of anonymity.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

EGYPT

Church bomb kills dozens

A bombing at a chapel near Egypt's main Coptic Christian cathedral killed 25 people and wounded another 49 on Sunday in one of the deadliest attacks carried out against the religious minority in recent memory.

The attack came two days after a bomb elsewhere in Cairo killed six policemen, an assault claimed by a shadowy group that authorities say is linked to the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

TURKEY A DAY OF MOURNING People carry coffins of victims during a memorial Sunday for police killed outside a stadium in Istanbul. Turkey declared a national day of mourning after twin blasts on Saturday killed dozens. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

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metro VIEWS
Your essential daily news
Monday, December 12, 2016

URBAN ETIQUETTE ELLEN VANSTONE

THE QUESTION

How does one account for income disparity among groups of friends?

©Ani Castillo

Dear Ellen,

How do I politely tell my friends I can't afford to hang out with them? At university, it wasn't a problem, but now I feel like they must have family money I never knew about or they're earning a ton more than me. But somehow they can afford expensive dinners out, and now they all want to go to Cuba for a long weekend. I just don't have that kind of money. How do I beg off without appearing rude or uninterested in my old gang?

MM

Dear Ellen,

Every time I go for lunch with my gal pals, there's a problem with the bill. There's always one person who insists we pay separately, and then calculates what everyone had down to the last penny. I say we should just take turns picking up the whole tab. Who's right?

SC

Dear MM and SC,

It's funny how people these days will reveal every gory detail of their physical health, relationship issues and sex lives while personal finances remain strictly off limits.

I've been in MM's position — shocked at how rich some of my friends seemed compared to me. And horribly self-conscious about my own lack of funds (and expensive clothes, car, home, etc.). Then, one day, while they were urging me to come along to their next hiking trip in Europe, I suddenly found myself telling the truth instead of lying about work obligations: "That sounds like fun, but I can't afford it."

It's funny how people will reveal every detail of their physical health and sex lives while personal finances remain off limits.

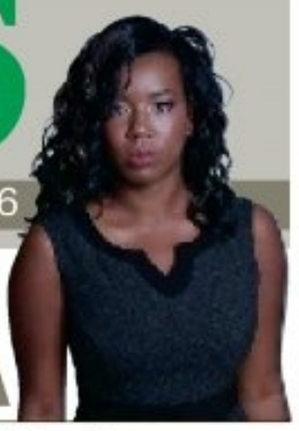
The world didn't end. They didn't seem to think less of me. The reaction was basically, "Oh, that sucks," and the conversation carried on. In subsequent gatherings, I detected a politeness on their part in not talking too much about the European expedition in case I felt excluded. But neither did they make their trip a secret, which would have made me feel even more excluded. In short, they behaved with perfect manners, were sensitive to my situation, and ultimately treated the whole issue the way it should be treated between friends — as not a big deal.

With SC's restaurant-bill problem, I wonder if it's another case of economic disparity. The nitpicker who insists on forensic accounting at the end of the meal may have carefully ordered only a salad because she's on a budget and can't afford to split a bill that includes everyone else's sea bass and champagne. Or maybe she really is a cheapskate with deep-seated neuroses about how money represents the love she never received as a child.

Either way, you as her friend should swallow your irritation and go along with it. And if you do insist on picking up the whole tab to avoid the nickel and diming, feel free. But remember it's your choice, and no one owes you anything next time you lunch with the ladies.

Need advice?
Email Ellen:
scene@metronews.ca

VICKY MOCHAMA



Viola Desmond's face is small comfort for the economically deprived

The decision to put Viola Desmond on the $10 bill is a landmark win for black people and communities of colour in Canada.

But there is no symbolic win powerful enough to justify how racism affected her life and robbed her of her many successes.

Despite being a businesswoman at the heart of Halifax's black entrepreneurial class, the trial against her ultimately broke her. She died in poverty.

It's in this way that racism robs families and communities for generations.

Racism is an economic interest that levies a fine on otherness and punishes those who will not accept the fine. Canada's government, lawmakers and leaders, have been the enforcers and beneficiaries.

Viola Desmond experienced this viscerally when she was arrested, jailed and fined for refusing to sit in the Rose Theatre's balcony, which was designated for its black patrons. Her failure, by way of the quotidian act of buying a movie ticket, to acknowledge the racial hierarchy required swift punishment.

Through the police and in the courts, the force of the state was brought in judgment of her blackness. She was fined $26 for "defrauding" the province of its one-cent amusement tax. Six of those dollars were given to the theatre manager. The oppressor was given a bounty for enforcing white supremacy. Inequality of choice was thus compounded.

Some say Desmond's place on the $10 bill is, at worst, a revision of history, and, at best, an attempt to sweep the uglier parts of our history aside. It's a specious argument that suggests history is being taught via the medium of our plastic currency. (The symbols on our currency currently include an icebreaker, which replaced the Famous Five, who I would argue were far more groundbreaking than a boat.)

When it comes to money, the ongoing legacy of racism is to deprive communities of colour. According to research by economist Krishna Pendakur, a visible minority man born in Canada earns about 18 per cent less than his Canadian-born white male counterpart. Indigenous Canadians live in a poverty so vast and crushing that it has been called a human-rights crisis.

A 2011 report on Canada's Colour Coded Labour Market found that poverty rates are three times higher for racialized families. That report also highlights that in 2006, the year of the last longform census, racialized Canadians were earning 81.4 cents to every dollar that non-racialized Canadians made.

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Monday, December 12, 2016

Al Gore's climate change doc An Inconvenient Truth is getting a sequel

Knock their socks off

Holiday Ideas

There's a meme of the Grinch as a kid frowning after getting socks for Christmas. That same Grinch as an adult is all smiles when he gets another set. It was likely a pair of Merino wool socks that changed his mind — a cultish following has developed for the super-soft footwear among normcore and athleisure devotees in recent years. Be warned: Merino wool socks that look cool while keeping your feet warm usually cost between $25-35 per pair. Here are a few of our top picks. **MELISSA DUNNE/FOR METRO**

1 Wigwam

Wigam Mills, Inc. is a family-run business that's been making socks since 1905 in Wisconsin. The 'Miley' sock is made of merino wool, stretch nylon, and spandex. This striped pair won't sing you bouncy songs á la its namesake, Miley Cyrus, but they will keep your tootsies looking sassy.
$18 (U.S.); wigwam.com.

2 Icebreakers

Many of New Zealand's Merino wool products end up being sent to us shivering Canadians this time of year. Icebreaker socks are among those products. These pretty pink socks, made of Merino wool, nylon, and lycra, will keep your toes warm while ensuring that you look hawt.
$34.99; icebreaker.com

3 Darn Tough

This is the perfect pair of socks for the patriot in your life. The O Canada sock is made of Merino wool, lycra, and nylon. Darn Tough has been making its socks in Vermont for almost four decades. This pair will serve any Canadian darn well, whether during a game of shinny, or at the pub after the game.
$33; sportinglife.ca

4 Smartwool

Smartwool was started by two ski instructors in 1999. Since then, its socks have developed a devoted fan base. These smart, snowflake-adorned socks, made of a mix of Merino wool, nylon, and elastane, actually keep feet warm. Whether hitting the slopes, the sidewalk, or the subway, these socks are the gift that keeps on giving all winter long.
$29.99; sportchek.ca

5 L.L. Bean

The receiver of these L.L. Bean socks will surely be head over heels for them. The socks are made in Maine specifically for skiing and snowboarding. This pair features a mix of Primaloft acrylic, Merino wool, nylon, polyester, and spandex, and they also come with the classic clothier's famous lifetime guarantee.
$24.95 (U.S.); llbean.com

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JOHANNA SCHNELLER
WHAT I'M WATCHING

A very merry Murdoch

THE SHOW: Once Upon a Murdoch Christmas
THE MOMENT: The buildup

Murdoch Mysteries serves up ham and cheesy jokes with a side of suspense in this year's Christmas special. CONTRIBUTED

Police constable George (Jonny Harris) enters HQ holding a crate aloft. "It's arrived, lads," he announces. "My latest novel."

"It's just pictures," says Henry (Lachlan Murdoch).

"This is a literary innovation," George counters. "It's a novel you can read in half an hour."

"One of your Jumpin' Jack books?" asks Jackson (Kristian Bruun).

"Yes, but he does more than jump," George says. "He has all manner of devices. His shoes have wheels, which allow him to move quick as a flash."

"But he still jumps," Henry says. "Why don't you call him Jumpin' Jack Flash?"

"Because that would be ridiculous," George says. Ho ho ho.

That's a lengthy setup for a short punchline. But everything you need to know about this two-hour Christmas special — and Murdoch Mysteries, the series from which it's spun — can be found in this scene.

And while we're distracted by this buildup to the deliberately hokey pun, the writers layer in information that's going to come in handy later.

Breaking Bad it is not. But that's the point of Murdoch, it's Breaking Good. You know in the end, orphans will sing, icy hearts will melt in a Christmas Carol/It's a Wonderful Life mash-up, and another lame joke will arrive.

Sure enough: "You might as well have your hero fly, like some kind of superhuman being," George's illustrator scoffs.

"We could call him Superma . . . Super-human-man!" George says. And to all a good night.

Once Upon a Murdoch Christmas airs Dec. 12 at 8 p.m. on CBC.

Johanna Schneller is a media connoisseur who zeroes in on pop-culture moments. She appears Monday through Thursday.

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All vertebrates yawn but modern science is still working to unravel the mystery behind it. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE

THE MOVES

Embrace the yoga behind your yawn

YuMee Chung
Torstar News Service

Long before you took your first yoga class, your body already knew something about coordinating breath and movement, thanks to the mechanism of yawning. We humans start practising this nascent form of yoga in utero, yet we are taught from an early age to suppress our yawns for fear of causing offence.

We explored the simple pleasures of yawning inside the Single Breath exhibit at the Ontario Science Centre's AstraZeneca Human Edge.

Try Full Body Yawns to ventilate your lungs, stretch your body, and restore balance to the autonomic nervous system.

1. Stand with relaxed posture — unlatch the belly, mellow out the pelvic floor, and unburden your shoulders.
2. Hang the lower jaw open and allow the breath to flow in and out through your mouth.
3. Pretend you've been cast as the lead yawner in a movie and fake a few really big yawns: try curling your hands into fists, shrugging the shoulders, and tightening up all your muscles as you take a few staccato inhales through the mouth, then splay your fingers as you reach your arms out in any and all directions.
4. Have fun with the sounds of yawning whether they are high and squeaky or low and guttural. Let the sounds surprise and delight you.
5. Give yourself permission to yawn for five minutes without covering your mouth or feeling the least bit apologetic.
6. It is perfectly normal for your eyes and nose to get moist. Blow your nose as often as you need to.

YuMee Chung is a recovering lawyer who teaches yoga in Toronto. She is on the faculty of several yoga teacher training programs and leads international yoga retreats. Learn more about her at padmani.com.

There is a fair way to split those bills

ADVICE

Higher income earner should shell out more for expenses

Gail Vaz-Oxlade
For Metro Canada

Rather than a 50/50 split, divvying up the proportionate shares of bills is fairer for both members of a couple, leaving money in each pocket for individual goals. ISTOCK

Whether you're planning to live with a mate or officially tie the knot, it's a good idea to have a chat about how you'll manage your incomes as a couple.

While many people just split everything 50/50, I believe a proportionate splitting of joint expenses is fairer.

Let's take the example of Chris and Alex. Alex makes $65,000 a year, and Chris makes $40,000 a year.

Splitting the bills 50/50 would mean that Chris ends up spending disproportionately more income on joint expenses, leaving little or nothing for individual goals such as savings or travel.

That's why a proportionate split is far fairer; it leaves money in each pocket for savings, managing individual expenses and having a life.

Use net numbers for this calculation. Since a higher income earner will pay more in taxes, using gross numbers isn't fair. So start with how much you each bring home a month — the money that actually goes into the bank account. So that $65,000 gross turns into $52,000 after taxes, or $4,333 per month, and that $40,000 gross turns into $34,000 after taxes, or $2,833 per month.

The first step is to add your net incomes together. Then divide each individual income by this figure and multiply by 100.

When Alex and Chris add their monthly incomes together they get $4,333 + $2,833 = $7,166.

Time to divide Chris's income by that $7,166 and then multiply by 100 to get a percentage: $2,833 ÷ 7,166 x 100 = 39.53 per cent, which will round nicely to 40 per cent. Which means that Alex will pay 60 per cent of the expenses.

Since Alex and Chris are paying $2,700 a month in rent, they would each contribute the following to their joint account to cover their rent costs:

Alex: $2,700 x 60 per cent = $1,620, or 37 per cent of net income.

Chris: $2,700 x 40 per cent = $1,080, or 38 per cent of net income.

See how nicely that works out?

This, of course, only applies to the bills you agree to split. If you've run up a whole bunch of debt that your mate doesn't want to have anything to do with, then you're on your own. The same goes for individual expenses. If Alex chooses to drive a fancy car that costs $600 a month and Chris chooses a car that costs $200 a month, they would each pay their own car costs.

It is important that partners also talk about what they'll do if there's a change in circumstances.

It's important that partners also talk about what they'll do if there's a change in circumstances.

One of you may be out of work temporarily. How will you even up after? And if you decide to have a family and one of you stays home, even in the short term, how will you manage the bills and ensure the non-working partner has some money of their own?

These discussions may feel hard; people find it difficult to talk about money. But not talking will leave you both in the dark, a place where resentment thrives.

So communicate, don't disintegrate.

For more money advice, visit Gail's website at gailvazoxlade.com

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metro SPORTS

Calgary's Ted-Jan Bloemen won long-track speedskating bronze in the 10,000-metre ISU World Cup race in the Netherlands Sunday

Silenced by the Sounders

PLAYOFF ROUNDUP

TFC's title bid falls painfully short on penalty kicks

Laurie Wilson
Metro | Toronto

After the suspense and shock wore off on Saturday night, two things became clear for both Toronto FC and the city's sports fans alike: This one's going to hurt for a while and soccer can be incredibly cruel.

The 36,000-plus in attendance to watch Toronto FC fall just short of its first MLS championship quickly filed out of the stands and into the frosty Toronto night as if in an attempt to move on with their lives and forget as quickly as possible.

"It's only sports" after all.

But in turning over and assessing key moments in the aftermath of a Sounders championship won on penalty kicks, the reality of just how close Toronto was to claiming its first ever MLS silverware becomes stark.

"You start thinking about every play, every moment and everything that could have been a little bit different," bleary-eyed Toronto FC head coach Greg Vanney said after Seattle's 5-4 shootout win following 120 minutes of scoreless play.

"Disappointed and I'm sure it will hit me and I will break down at some point but right now I'm just a little bit numb."

BY THE NUMBERS

TFC		Seattle
19	Total shots (including blocked)	3
7	Shots on target	0
10	Shots inside box	0
10	Corners	5
76.7%	Passing accuracy	68.3%
54.2%	Possession	45.8%

STATISTICS BY OPTA

Sebastian Giovinco failed to register a shot on target on Saturday. EDUARDO LIMA/METRO

Seattle keeper Stefan Frei reaches back to make a save off of Jozy Altidore's header in MLS Cup extra time on Saturday night at BMO Field. EDUARDO LIMA/METRO

MLS CUP FINAL TORONTO SEATTLE

The numbers and highlights do nothing to soften the idea that the better team lost on Saturday.

And if it all sounds like sour grapes, hometown bias or hindsight being 20/20, consider that even the championship-winning coach was counting his blessings post match.

"I would've wished, and I'm not criticizing the team, but I really wished we could've played maybe a little bit better," said Sounders boss Brian Schmetzer.

"I think we were fortunate to get out of the game and get the game into penalty kicks."

Yes, Toronto was the aggressor throughout and built more chances with its home crowd spurring it on to one of its more composed and defensively sound performances of the season.

But any pressure the Reds put forth on attack was soaked up by an equally game Sounders defence. Towering Seattle centre backs Chad Marshall and Roman Torres constantly kept bodies on and around striker Jozy Altidore and rendered Sebastian Giovinco mostly irrelevant.

And when TFC did manage to break them down, Stefan Frei was there. The 30-year-old former Reds keeper's crucial save on a looping Jozy Altidore header in the 108th minute signalled it just might not be TFC's night.

"It was a hell of a save," Altidore said. "At the end of the day you need to pull off something special. We just weren't able to."

"Obviously it's probably exactly how he wanted to hit that one," Frei said of Altidore's attempt. "Sometimes as a goalkeeper you feel like you're not going to get to the ball but you never know until you try. I try to keep my feet moving and give it my best shot."

> **Penalties is a game of luck.**
> Jozy Altidore

About 15 minutes later, Frei stopped Reds captain Michael Bradley from the spot and got help from his crossbar on Justin Morrow's penalty to give Seattle the edge. Torres clinched it in the sixth round to send the few thousand who travelled across the continent from Seattle into jubilation.

Now TFC heads into the off-season having scaled heights that would've been unthinkable a few years ago. As cruel as it might seem, heartbreaking defeats are the rule not the exception at even the world's biggest clubs. Although it may seem far away now, this loss should make future success even sweeter.

"It's a group that's grown incredibly over the last two years and I know their heads are down now, but they'll come back fighting once we start preseason next year," Vanney said. "I think there's a lot of lessons for this group to take away from this run that will only make us better as we go into next year and make us stronger as a group as we try to get back to this and come away winners."

NHL

Leafs halted by Colorado keeper

Semyon Varlamov helped the Colorado Avalanche rebound from one of the worst losses in team history with 51 saves in a 3-1 victory over the Toronto Maple Leafs on Sunday night.

Mikko Rantanen, Nathan MacKinnon and Blake Comeau scored for the Avalanche (11-15-1), who were thumped 10-1 on Saturday evening by the Montreal Canadiens.

Antoine Bibeau made 26 saves in his first NHL start,

SUNDAY At ACC

AVS	LEAFS
3	1

Jake Gardiner scoring the lone goal for Toronto (11-11-5).

The Leafs, who won 4-1 in Boston on Saturday, are now 0-5-1 on the second half of back-to-backs this season.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

IN BRIEF

Jacobs beats Carruthers in National Grand Slam final

He took the scenic route, but Brad Jacobs and his rink from Sault Ste. Marie, Ont., finally won in front of their hometown crowd.

After losing in the final in their last Grand Slam of Curling event in Sault Ste. Marie back in 2014, Jacobs and his team beat Winnipeg's Reid Carruthers 4-2 on Sunday afternoon to win The National title.

"Relief is a good word to use," Jacobs said following the win. THE CANADIAN PRESS

Costa keeps Chelsea top

Fiery striker Diego Costa used his aggression in the right way to keep Chelsea top of the English Premier League on Sunday.

Costa muscled West Bromwich Albion defender Gareth McAuley off the ball before cutting inside and curling a shot into the top corner in the 76th minute to seal a 1-0 win for Chelsea at Stamford Bridge. Chelsea has won its last nine matches in the league to power to the top of the standings.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

NFL

Bell tolls as sliding Bills fall to Steelers

Le'Veon Bell had no issues with traction in establishing the Pittsburgh Steelers' rushing record on a slick, snow-covered field.

Whether it was rushing to his left, right or up the middle, the Steelers running back scored three times and gained 236 yards rushing in a 27-20 win over the Buffalo Bills on Sunday.

The Steelers (8-5) overcame three interceptions thrown by Ben Roethlisberger to win their fourth straight and improve to 8-5 and keep pace in the AFC playoff race.

Le'Veon Bell GETTY IMAGES

It's the Bills (6-7) who were unable to get a hand on Bell in having their playoff chances all but mathematically slip away.

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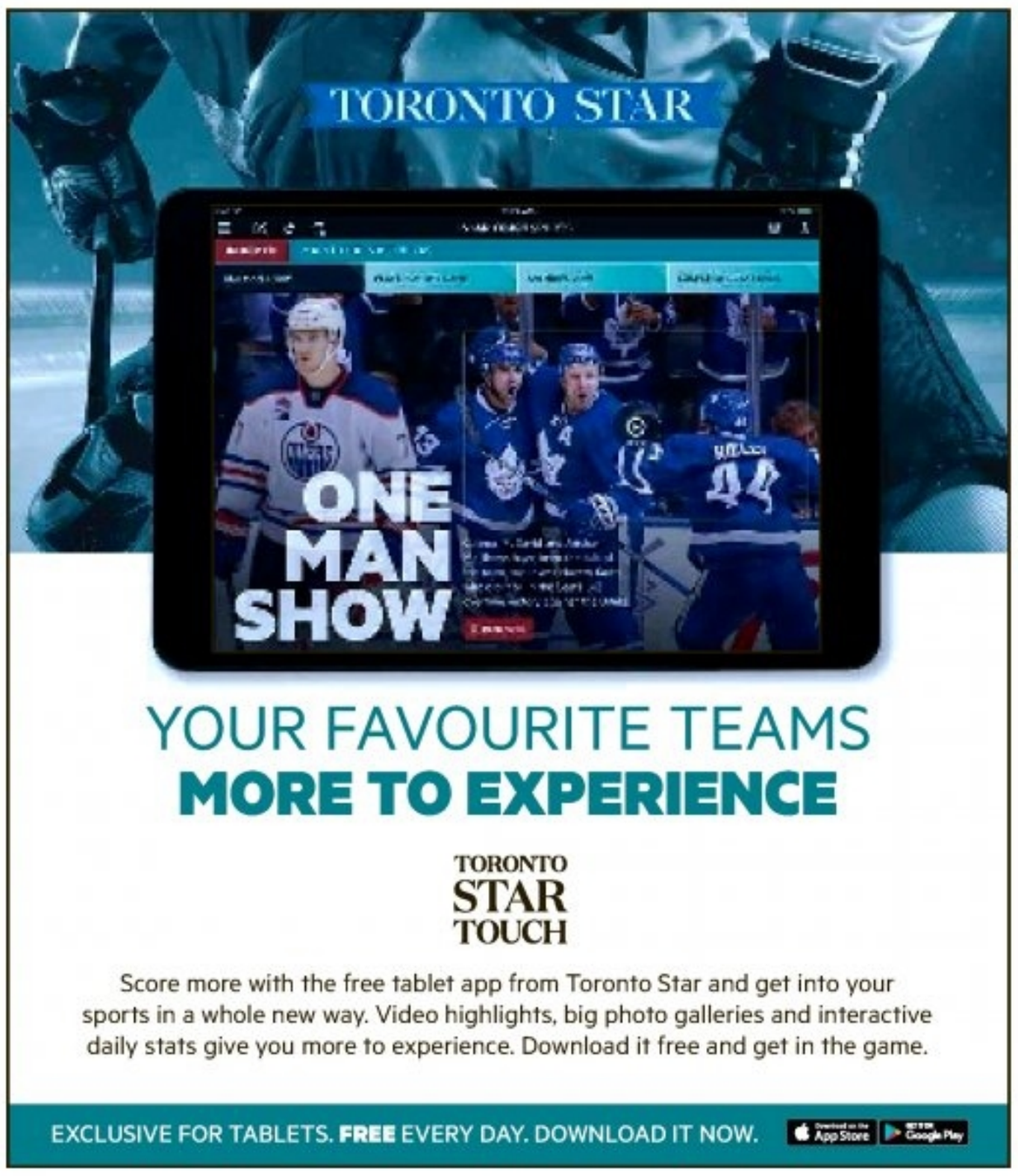
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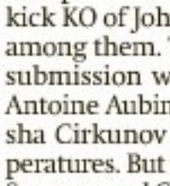
Fight for the ages saves day

UFC 206

Criticized card lit up by superb battle between Swanson, Choi



Joe Callaghan
Metro | Toronto

Doo-Ho Choi and "Cub" Swanson gave UFC 206 a much-needed jolt of magic on Saturday in Toronto. PETER POWER/THE CANADIAN PRESS

Three years of waiting. And then in the space of three rounds of bewitching brutality, fighting fires were reignited.

Canada has recently questioned its place in the new UFC world. But as the foundations of Toronto's Air Canada Centre were rocked to their core by a baby-faced Korean and a venerable veteran late Saturday night, a strained relationship was strengthened again.

UFC 206 had been blighted by disputes and disruptions to the point that some had threatened to boycott the organization's first pay-per-view event in Toronto since 2013. Yet every soul who made their way to the ACC was treated to a card that defied all expectations and a fight for the ages when for fully 15 minutes, featherweights Cub Swanson and Doo-Ho Choi engaged in a barely believable war of attrition.

There had been sparks earlier in the night, Lando Vannata's sumptuous spinning wheel kick KO of John Makdessi chief among them. The back-to-back submission wins for Canucks Antoine Aubin-Mercier and Misha Cirkunov also raised temperatures. But for all that, it was Swanson and Choi who delivered something else, something truly worth waiting for. The second round in particular served up five minutes of the kind of mind-bending mayhem that at this kind of peak, few sporting organizations can match. There wasn't a fan left in their seat at the end of the round as both fighters had to be helped to theirs.

Swanson, who has seen his share of fighting nights, good and bad, took immense pride in delivering such a soaring high when the expectations of so many in the house had been so low. "It definitely means a lot to me because there was a lot of people talking crap about this card," said Swanson afterwards, the decision having gone his way on all judges' scorecards. "I'm glad I had that performance here, around a great crowd."

Such was the caliber of the contest that the main and co-main event which followed could never live up to what had come before, even if Cowboy Cerrone did his best with a shuddering head kick KO of Matt Brown that again raised the rafters.

The headline act largely struggled to do likewise. Having missed weight and seen his chance of an interim title go with it, Anthony Pettis's miserable week was compounded as he played right into the punishing hands of Max Holloway, crowned the interim featherweight champion after a third-round stoppage.

While the hordes drifted out Sunday morning satisfied with all this bang for their buck, the UFC's money men might not have been so buoyant. The ACC was officially sold out with a declared attendance of 18,057, yet the gate revenue was just US$1.8M. The organization's previous PPV night, UFC 205 in New York — admittedly a one-off mega-event — made a gate of almost $18M from a crowd of 20,000. A better context may be that Toronto's most recent PPV to this — UFC 165 in 2013 — made a marginally bigger profit in spite of selling 3,000 less tickets.

$1.8M

The amount of gate revenue generated for T.O's UFC 206. Compare that to the $18M generated by UFC 205 in New York.

Raps to get another peek at Greek Freak

NBA

Defending quick Buck will require a team effort

Freak? Oh, yeah, he's a freak, that Giannis Antetokounmpo is. They don't call him The Greek Freak solely because his name's hard to spell and a nickname is easier to remember.

The Milwaukee Bucks guard/forward/centre is freakish because he's towering at six-foot-11 and thick at 225 pounds and as quick as they come, morphing into one of those unicorns that are all the rage in the NBA these days.

And Monday, the Toronto Raptors get to try to figure him out again.

They didn't do a particularly good job the last time the teams met; Antetokounmpo scorched them for 29 points and 11 assists, providing Toronto coach Dwane Casey with a litany of bad memories.

"They had 16 dunks and layups in the last game," Casey recalled Sunday of Toronto's 105-99 win two weeks ago. "A lot of them, I don't know exactly how many, but a lot of them were him."

Antetokounmpo's ability to cover immense areas of the court in a minimum of steps makes him one of the most dangerous ball-handling big men in the game.

It's simplistic to suggest teams just play off him and dare him to shoot — the one weakness in his game at the moment — because he can close that gap rapidly and still get past defenders.

"He's long, he gets to the goal in three steps, three dribbles," said DeMarre Carroll, who'll be one of Toronto's primary defenders on Monday night. "We've just got to pack the paint and try not to let him get any easy ones.

"That's the biggest thing, you've got to pick and choose when you play off him, he can take one dribble, spin and he's at the goal. It's kind of challenging but at the same time we have to do it collectively as a group, one individual can't do it."

The Raptors did do a good job defending him late in that earlier game, with Carroll and a second defender squeezing him and a third Raptor trying to dislodge the ball. Kyle Lowry had a game-saving steal in exactly those circumstances that sealed Toronto's road win.

"He can get to the basket in one dribble from way past the three-point line," Casey said of the 22-year-old. "It's going to be a group effort. It can't be one guy that has got to be on the ball. The next guy in help position and then Jonas (Valanciunas) and Lucas (Nogueira) have got to do an extraordinary job of protecting the rim.

"When we shoot the ball, our defence starts then. We've got to locate where he is, make sure we have a crowd where he is. We didn't do a good job of that last time." TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Giannis Antetokounmpo is off to a career-high season's start in points (21.9), field-goal percentage (.521), blocks (2.1), steals (2.0), assists (5.9) and rebounds (9.0). GARY DINEEN/NBAE VIA GETTY IMAGES

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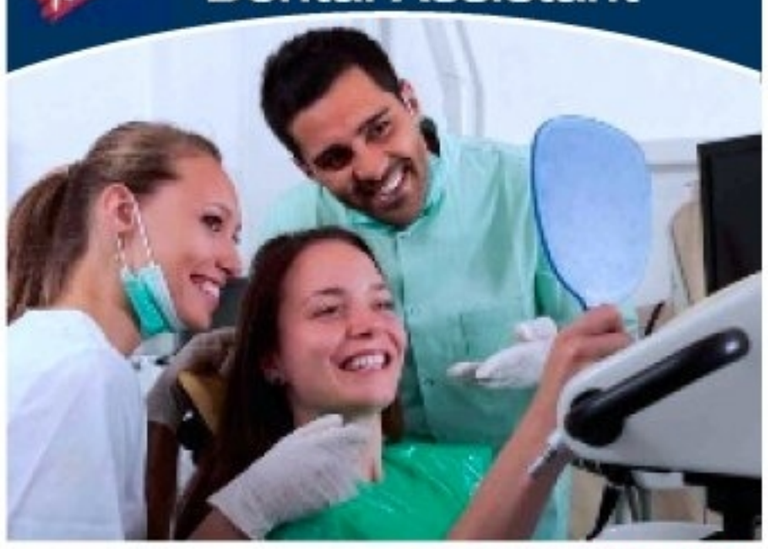
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MAKE IT TONIGHT

Creamy Pea Tagliatelle

PHOTO: MAYA VISNYEI

Ceri Marsh & Laura Keogh
For Metro Canada

This is our new favourite dish for three important reasons: 1) It's simple 2) It has an impossibly creamy sauce and you basically do nothing to achieve it 3) outside of toast, it's so fast.

Ready in 20 minutes
Prep time: 10 minutes
Cook time: 20 minutes
Serves 4

Ingredients
- 500 g tagliatelle pasta
- 2 cups frozen peas
- 1 Tbsp olive oil
- 1 onion, diced
- 3 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 cup creme fraiche
- 3 tsp chopped chives or flat-leaf parsley

Directions

1. Cook the tagliatelle according to package directions. In the last minute of the pasta cooking process, drop the peas into the water. Drain both the pasta and peas.

2. Meanwhile, in a large skillet, heat the oil and saute the onion and garlic for 5 minutes until fragrant. Stir in the creme fraiche. Add the pasta and peas, folding them with tongs to coat the pasta with the sauce. Sprinkle with chopped chives or flat-leaf parsley and serve.

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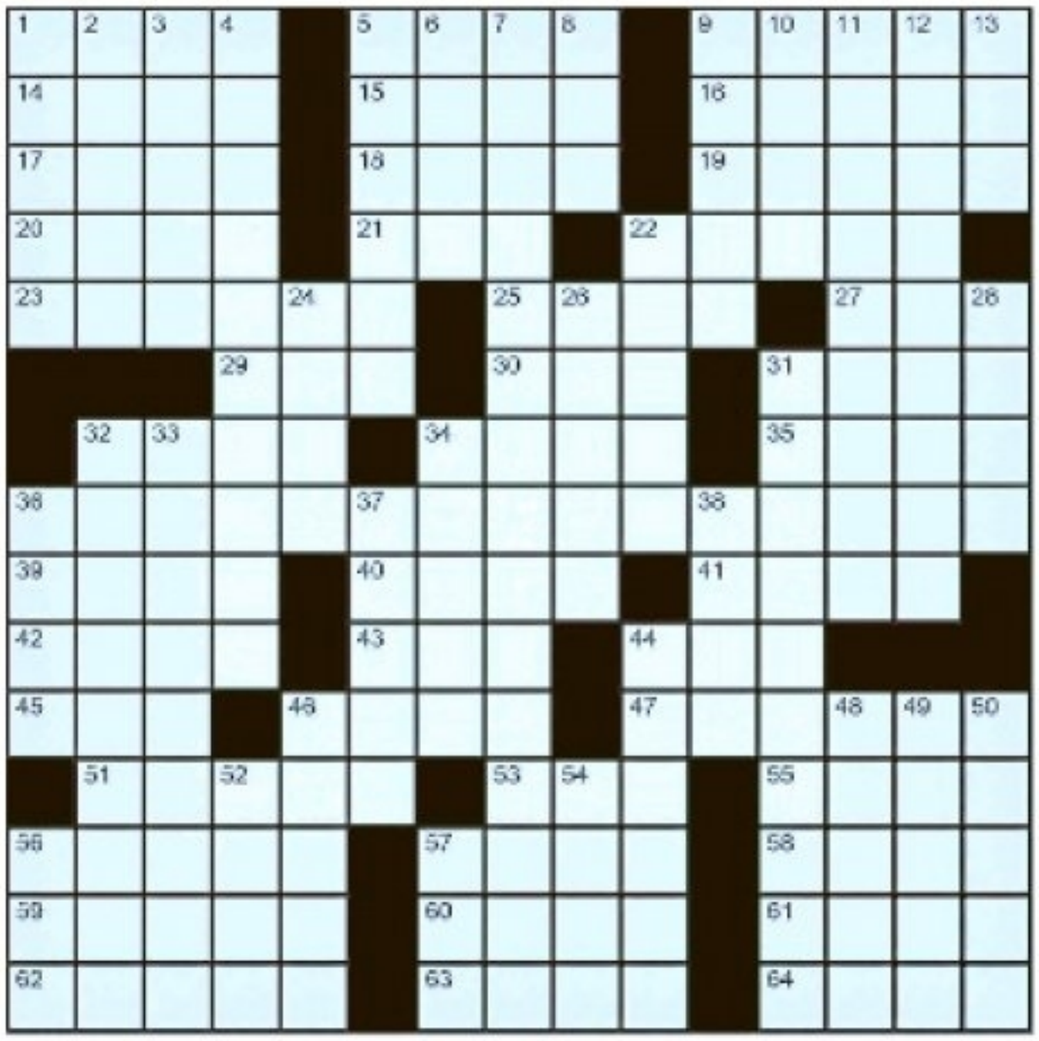
CROSSWORD Canada Across and Down

BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



ACROSS
1. __ Mountain (Year-round recreation destination in Ontario)
5. Unfreeze
9. Big blooper
14. Santa __, __ (Capital and its American state, briefly)
15. Courtney Love band
16. Patrons' provisions-picking props
17. Princess in "Star Wars" (1977)
18. Lasso
19. Bonus
20. __ (Play's opening)
21. 'Pepper' ending (Pizza topping)
22. Ancient language
23. Police officer's interest: 2 wds.
25. At hand
27. Pose for a painting
29. __ Vegas
30. Earth invaders, commonly
31. Canadian actor Mr. Rogen
32. Hideaway
34. "Who Is Harry Kellerman and Why __ __ Saying Those Terrible Things About Me?" (1971)
35. Verifiable
36. Home in downtown Toronto of The Queen's Own Rifles of Canada (Reserve regiment for which Camilla, Duchess of Cornwall, is the Colonel-in-Chief): 3 wds.
39. Real Shannon
7. #1-Across in the Wintertime: 3 wds.
8. Diminutive
9. Makeup application mistake
10. "America's __ Top Model"
11. Disease immunizer
12. What a newly-moved-into home often needs
13. "Invasion __." (1985) starring Chuck Norris
22. __ printer
24. 50+ org. in The States
26. Mr. Hawke
28. "Or so __ say." (Apparently)
31. Plots
32. Telephone ringy-dingy that's not long distance: 2 wds.
33. Hair dye shade: 2 wds.
34. Jennifer __ (Canadian actress of ABC sitcom "The Goldbergs")
36. __-mucil (Fiber supplement brand)
37. "Garfield: __ of Two Kitties" (2006)
38. Famous painting, with Lisa
44. About [abbr.]
46. Pair of pants part
48. Overhead
49. Dogma
50. Strain
52. Fury
54. Like sludge that's leaking out
56. Kilos alternatives
57. __ and don'ts
40. Identical
41. Elm: French
42. Bills in restaurants
43. __ pollution
44. "Is there __ left?"
45. __ clear
46. Sommelier's serving
47. Epicurean's refined asset
51. Particular pink
53. Drench
55. Wild goat
56. Hawaiian veranda
57. Gateway
58. __ the wiser
59. Skyline structures, shortly
60. Rice-shaped pasta
61. Best __ (Greatest)
62. Rain/snow mix
63. "Renegade" rockers
64. Paving stone

DOWN
1. A Sharp's other name: letter + wd.
2. Bloodsucker
3. Amalgamate
4. Web marketer's address groupings: 2 wds.
5. Sofa blankets
6. Blind Melon singer

IT'S ALL IN THE STARS Your daily horoscope by Francis Drake

Aries March 21 - April 20
Be careful, because this is an accident-prone day due to the tension building up before tomorrow's Full Moon. Think twice before you speak or act.

Taurus April 21 - May 21
Your focus is on money, cash flow and earnings, as well as major purchases today. You might do some shopping therapy because of tension before tomorrow's Full Moon. Caution.

Gemini May 22 - June 21
Today the Moon is in your sign, and you feel the buildup before tomorrow's Full Moon in your sign. This means you have to be patient with partners and close friends.

Cancer June 22 - July 23
Don't set high standards for yourself that are too tough to achieve. Go easy on yourself, because tomorrow is the Full Moon. You have enough to deal with.

Leo July 24 - Aug. 23
You might feel a buildup of tension with a close friend, especially a female acquaintance. Or this could happen between you and a member of a group. Just be patient and diplomatic.

Virgo Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
You feel the pressure of trying to keep everyone happy at home and at work building up within you. Of course, this is impossible. (However, you can't ignore home and family.)

Libra Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
This is a mildly accident-prone day because of the energy building up before tomorrow's Full Moon. Don't rush things. Do not be hasty. Stay mellow.

Scorpio Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
Disagreements about shared property, inheritances and such might arise now. If so, they will be settled about three days from now.

Sagittarius Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Tomorrow, the only Full Moon opposite your sign all year will take place. This is why you feel tension with others today as this energy builds up.

Capricorn Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
Difficulties with co-workers might arise today, because everyone feels the energy of tomorrow's Full Moon building up within them.

Aquarius Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
Be patient with romantic partners today. Likewise, parents need to be patient with their kids. Everybody feels a buildup today before tomorrow's Full Moon.

Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
Do not let the demands of family interfere too much with your job at this time, because your job is important. Tomorrow's Full Moon creates this tension.

CONCEPTIS SUDOKU by Dave Green

Every row, column and box contains 1-9

				6				3
		7		9		4		
	4		8				5	
		6		2				
1	8						9	6
				4		8		
	9				4		7	
		8		1		9		
3				7				

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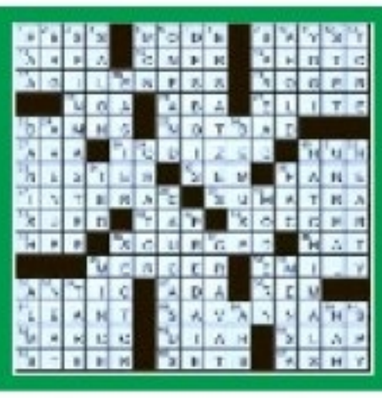

3	4	6	1	8	2	7	5	9
9	1	2	7	3	5	6	8	4
7	5	8	4	9	6	2	3	1
2	3	1	8	6	7	4	9	5
5	8	7	2	4	9	1	6	3
6	9	4	5	1	3	8	2	7
1	6	5	9	2	4	3	7	8
8	7	3	6	5	1	9	4	2
4	2	9	3	7	8	5	1	6

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